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Reports
JMC
SVW

TO: The Editor
RONI
Room
Hqs Bldg. CIA

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In their very interesting new publication, Review of National Intelligence, some of my friends on the IC Staff present a curious finding. They take intelligence analysts to task for "an old and familiar analytical bias" against expecting irrational moves by "essentially rational men." I say, vive le bias!*

Prediction of the kind of crude power play that Ioannidis instigated on Cyprus would have required a superhuman elimination of such "bias." Any prudent analyst would have foreseen such a move as likely to: (1) trigger direct Turkish armed intervention; (2) therefore fail of its objective; and (3) ultimately bring down the Athens regime. By adopting this course, Ioannidis carried unreason to a self-destructive extreme.

Analysts must consider and test all possible alternatives in developing situations -- including the most irrational. Any alternative that would have significant repercussions for US interests or policies should be duly noted, and the analyst's assessment of its degree of likelihood presented. To give a dramatic alternative a higher degree of likelihood because it is irrational, as the IC Staff's "lesson-learned" seems to suggest, would, in my opinion, border on the irresponsible. An analyst who consistently predicts the irrational -- especially the extremely irrational, as in the Ioannidis case -- is doomed to judge wrongly in by far the greatest number of cases. To allow for the irrational is one thing; to confidently predict it, quite another.

Those of us who have struggled for years to anticipate the course of world events are well aware of its irrational tendencies. Situations usually develop within the bounds of logic and reason, however, and do not take irrational tacks. Most international conflicts, for example, are settled peacefully and "reasonably"; we should not predict war -- an essentially irrational alternative -- every time a dispute arises between two states.

* See Principal Findings of the Post-Mortem Report, "An Examination of the Intelligence Community's Performance Before and During the Cyprus Crisis of 1974," and the reprise thereof in the Review of National Intelligence, February 1975.

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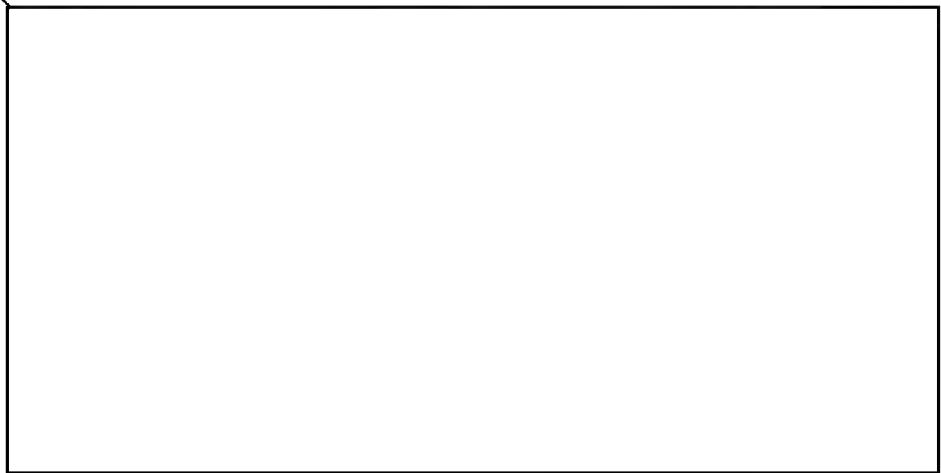
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I believe the Community did a fairly good job of reporting on the incipient crisis in Cyprus and alerting policy makers to the possible consequences. A confident intelligence prediction of the Greek-sponsored coup attempt would have been a classic example of a bad estimate which happened to turn out right.



Assistant Deputy Director
for Estimates, DIA

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MEMORANDUM FOR: [REDACTED]

In Staff Meeting this morning, I believe [REDACTED] stated that comments on RONI were from DDI Analyst -- Cy Attached and from DIA not DDI.

Note also, Pen note to Gen Wilson and [REDACTED] - did not check to see if PKD sent to them.

11 Mar 75
(DATE)

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